PREFACE

Green mountains are dotted with red rooftops, and villages alternately seem to overflow with life and ache with empty sadness. A heart-shaped country between Serbia and Montenegro and Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina is still recovering from the war that devastated it from 1992-1995. International agencies and peacekeepers remain ubiquitous here, but local organizations are also growing in prominenc,e and control of the country rests more and more with Bosnian-Herzegovinians themselves.

The fifteen kilometer stretch of road from the nearest city is marked by villages that remain uninhabited shadows of their former selves, while Kamenica stands as a village that has reclaimed its life. Village leaders travel that road frequently to meet with local government officials and members of an NGO that has worked extensively in the community. Kamenica exists as an island among deserted villages, yet the bridges between Kamenica and the outside world are strong.

Tegare sits perched on the Drina River, 10 kilometers from the nearest city. Most families in the village are incomplete after war, and most villagers are elderly people. They have come together, once, to build a road but largely exist as two separate ethnic communities within one village. Tegare remains highly disconnected from the villages that surround it and the municipality to which it belongs.

As a small city and municipal center, Kupres could be a place where citizens and the government work together to advance the community. Kupres, however, is a place where institutional and personal bridges between citizens and the government are both weak and few. The community has awakened with a new sense of activism in the last year, and nascent advocacy and service-providing NGOs are now appearing.

Even a cursory look at the communities of Kamenica, Tegare and Kupres inspires questions about how each of these three communities has arrived at its present situation and where each of these communities might go from here. How is it that Kamenica has been so successful, with scarce economic resources, while Kupres, with its notably more available resources, has struggled? Why has Kamenica benefited from productive links between the village and the municipal government whereas Tegare has remained isolated? What do the stories of these communities mean for community development in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

This work aims to answer those questions and others that arose from an in-depth examination of life in three very different BH communities. The implications of this work extend beyond the communities included in this study to provide insight for developing civil society institutions in B&H and, most specifically, for effectively involving individual citizens in a range of civil society efforts and groups.

CHAPTER I:
INDIVIDUAL CHOICES AND COMMUNITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Introduction

It would be a serious challenge indeed to identify an aid effort in Bosnia and Herzegovina[1] that has not identified developing or promoting civil society, increasing citizen engagement, overcoming a generalized sense of apathy, or improving governance as one of the main priorities of the intervention.[2] Within the local sector of BH non-governmental organizations, these key terms and others belonging to the realm of "NGO speak" have become key components for applications to international funding. However, underneath these profitable phrases, there is a dearth of analysis of what those phrases mean and, more importantly, of what they can and might mean for B&H. Assessments of civil society in B&H through polling conducted by the OSCE and the work of international consultants has also been widespread, focusing primarily on the roles played by NGOs in political processes and economic development.[3]

The bulk of this research has focused specifically on not only the roles of NGOs in B&H, but also on the opinions of those who are involved with NGOs. This is partially a matter of access: most research has been conducted in a short amount of time and, at least partially, by non-natives of B&H who do not speak the local language. In this focus on NGOs and the people who have been involved with them, much of the data about civil society in B&H neglects consideration of the individuals who are affected by the NGOs and who ultimately must constitute the public support for any representative civil society actors. It is the primary goal of this research to go beyond the individuals and groups who are commonly consulted for their opinions regarding civil society and economic development in order to access a broader variety

[1] Hereafter, the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be referred to as B&H. The adjective Bosnian-Herzegovinian will be abbreviated as BH.

[2] For examples, see the USAID Bosnia-Herzegovina's Democracy and Governance information at http://www.usaid.ba/demo_and_gov_factsheet02.htm and the Open Society Bosnia-Herzegovina Civil Society page at http://www.soros.org.ba/!en/civilno_drustvo.htm.

[3] Some of the most extensive polling regarding public opinion (including public opinion of NGOs and civil society actors) has been conducted by the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). See "Public Opinion Research on Issues of Concern to Citizens" from May and June 2004, available online at http://www.oscebih.org/public/document.asp?pg=2&l=eng.

of perspectives. While civil society leaders are considered in this work, as are government officials, the focus of this work falls squarely upon the "average" citizens who, if they are involved at all, are only cursorily involved with NGO and civil society efforts.

It is fitting that the opinions most emphasized in this work are those of individuals; the central question that this research seeks to answer focuses on the factors influencing choices of individuals to participate (or not) in community activities in their local village or city. The Mozaik Community Development Foundation (hereafter Mozaik)[4] seeks to encourage broad-based community involvement in the projects that it supports in local communities, with a particular focus on local volunteer involvement. This work extends beyond Mozaik projects to include other aspects of citizen participation in formal and informal community activities, seeking to answer the central question, "What are the barriers to and motivations for participation in community life in B&H?"

I explored this question through three in-depth community case studies (see *Methodology*, Page 9) with the hypothesis that an individual's sense of ability and feelings of inclusion in community activities would be the primary factors influencing his or her decision to participate in such activities. I expected the two most frequent answers to the question 'Why did you not participate in X project?' to be variations on, 'Because no one asked me,' and, 'Because I have nothing to offer.' In considering what factors contribute to the sentiments of inclusion and ability, I considered the roles of gender, war-time experience, education, collective community identity, and economics (most specifically, unemployment).

My early hypothesis was that gender and war-time experience would be key factors affecting a given individual's sense of ability and inclusion in community activities. In two out of three case study communities, gender was the single most accurate predictor of community engagement. Gender functioned as such a strong factor inhibiting participation of women both because women were not frequently asked to participate actively in projects and because women tended to feel that they had nothing to offer. The third community, in which women were almost as likely as men to be actively engaged in community life, lacked the gender-based education disparity present in the first two communities and provided evidence that specific social forces and inequalities tend to be at the root of gender-based engagement disparities. There was no

[4] Mozaik is a local BH Foundation, founded in 2000 as the NGO Development Foundation, that works to build social cohesion in communities through its Community Driven Approach to Development. See www.mozaik.ba for more information.

similar pattern of relationship between education disparities within gender groups and community participation. However, even in the first two communities, many women were able and willing to overcome the cultural forces that have long excluded them from collective life when specifically asked to participate in community activities.

Interestingly, war-time experience appeared to have only the most limited effect on community engagement and where it did seem to be an influential factor it was more because of how people were treated following the war than due to the actual physical or psychological effects of trauma. In the first two communities, trauma was widespread among citizens who survived the Fall of Srebrenica (residents of Tegare) and the common experience of internment and torture in camps (residents of Kamenica). In both of those communities, there was no difference in community participation or leadership as a result of individual trauma endured *or escaped*. However, the Bosniak community of Tegare has often been treated as a group of 'victims' of Srebrenica and, as such, has developed a disempowering sense of victim hood within the community itself. Contrastingly, the lesser known suffering in the community of Kamenica has not notably affected the way that aid agencies have worked with citizens and has had remarkably little impact on community life in the post-war period.

Due in part to the results of the first community case study in this research, a community that can be described as a 'community in waiting,' a parallel research question became, 'Why do some communities have many productive activities in which to participate while others lack such activities?' This question goes to the heart of another component of Mozaik's vision of social cohesion: productivity. How do community leaders, organizations and citizens become able and willing to begin projects or activities on their own, perhaps seeking assistance along the way but guiding the activities themselves? This suggests a sense of partial community autonomy, an ability to begin projects or create the energy for activities from within, while not necessarily implying that communities are able to achieve (or even ought to achieve) full autonomy. This community start-up ability and partial autonomy, which I call 'community entrepreneurship,' is a key component to building communities capable of working productively toward the collective good, independent of international aid agencies.

Given that the concept of community entrepreneurship emerged during the course of the research, I did not begin with a clear hypothesis delineating the influential factors in shaping such a sense of partial autonomy but instead began by assessing what is not enough (given that

the first community lacked any sense of community entrepreneurship). What I found in Tegare was that individual leadership, even at its strongest and most honorable, is not enough to provide the basis for community entrepreneurship. My sense in Tegare was that community entrepreneurship was lacking because there was a deficit of key democratic skills, including advocacy, strategic framing, and coalition building.[5]

What emerged in subsequent communities was that strong leadership and democratic skills are in fact essential ingredients of community entrepreneurship, but institutions form a key component of this as well. Institutions that contribute to community entrepreneurship in B&H are often themselves democratic in structure with leaders that have at least some basic democratic skills. The relationship between such institutions and the government emerged as essential within the B&H context, in which donations from private companies and individuals, due to both economic stagnation and complex tax law deficiencies, are inadequate for organizational subsistence.

The primary barrier to community entrepreneurship is, I believe, what others have identified as apathy. However, as this research and the sketches of individuals and communities that form its basis will show, apathy is not the word to describe the barriers to productive community relationships in many areas of B&H. Instead, there is a sense of frustration—a *stagnancy*—which is clearly inhibiting individuals' abilities to act. There is a sense that any impetus for change or progress must come from outside of the communities in question, yet there is an abundance of ideas within. As one woman, a member of a newly-formed NGO's leadership council, said, 'We have (things) in our head but cannot realize them!'

This abundance of ideas, and the widespread willingness to work toward their realization, is evidence of the inaccuracy of categorizing BH society as apathetic—a term implying a sense of indifference and lack of concern. Instead, the term I use to describe this aspect of BH society is stagnant—it is a group of individuals and organizations that are stuck, often having tried without success all avenues that they can conceive of for completing community initiatives and struggling for new ideas to pursue their goals.

[5] This deficit of democratic skills, as intended throughout this work, refers to the lack of citizens' and CBO leaders' understanding and ability to practice advocacy and strategic framing (in reference to effectively speaking with both government officials and donor organizations) as well as coalition building (refering more specifically to citizens' and leaders' abilities to effectively work together with existing formal and informal organizations to pursue common goals despite some differences in the organizations' overall objectives).

While this may paint a pessimistic picture of B&H in terms of local development, I believe that the understanding of BH society as stagnant rather than apathetic in fact offers much more reason for hope, in addition to providing a more accurate conceptualization of the undercurrents of community engagement, or lack thereof, in B&H. If community members are not apathetic, but rather are deeply concerned by the plight of their communities and stranded due in large part to the lack of certain skills and opportunities, then we can identify the areas in which change will allow for progress. If this is the case, we can identify and work in the areas that will allow ideas to exist outside of individuals' heads and instead as tangible results and commuity improvements. As this research will show, some elements of this stagnancy are areas in which organizations such as Mozaik can target their work to combat frustration and reverse frustration's disempowering effects. Most notably, by providing for the transfer of democratic skills and incentives to engage not just community members and organizations but also government officials, community development organizations and Mozaik in particular can strengthen their approach to building civil society by being more effective civil society actors themselves. Of course, some elements of this pervasive frustration are beyond the immediate reach of Mozaik—legal components and cultural aspects in particular will take a much more broad-based and longer-term approach if they are to be changed.

The work that follows first briefly discusses the relevant existing literature about civil society and community driven development and then sets forth my methodology and research results for the ethnographic case studies. The results section consists of three chapters, each providing an abbreviated ethnographic sketch of life in the three case-study communities. The conclusions will draw upon lessons from these three communities and discuss the implications of this data for Mozaik in particular and for other civil society and development actors in B&H in general so that they might work more effectively toward a long-term vision of productive, cohesive and engaged communities in B&H.

Framing the Conversation: A Brief Literature Review

Community-Driven Development (CDD) and Community-Based Development (CBD) are concepts that gained renewed popularity in the international development discourse in the late 1990s. Both CDD and CBD seek to increase the involvement of project beneficiaries in development projects: CBD seeks to actively include the beneficiaries while CDD seeks to give

community members decision-making power in project planning and implementation.[6] Mozaik focuses its efforts on CDD, seeking to place community members in the key roles of project design and implementation while also providing external trainings in order to equip community members to assume such responsibilities effectively.

Rao and Mauseri's review of CDD and CBD approaches is primarily focused on large international or multinational interventions, and many of the common weaknesses of CDD that they site (such as inadequate local knowledge) are resolved by the fact that Mozaik is a BH organization staffed by BH nationals with a great deal of local development experience. The authors also point to the importance of 'downward accountability' for local leaders and NGOs. Mozaik's focus on grounding NGOs' activities on the expressed desires of community members and its goal of making NGOs answerable to the communities that they serve address this common weakness of CDD approaches.

One weakness of CDD approaches that Mozaik might consider in its own work is development organizations' common failure to clearly define frequently used terms such as community, participation, social capital and civil society.[7] Mozaik generally defines communities geographically—working with residents of a particular city or village, for example. However, for the purposes of this research both the geographically defined communities, namely Tegare, Kamenica and Kupres, and the citizens' self-defined communities (in the case of Tegare, 'Serb Tegare' and 'Bosniak Tegare') are considered. Participation is defined by Mozaik primarily as citizen involvement in planning meetings (through attendance and contribution of ideas) and volunteer involvement in project implementation.

This research's fundamental questions about citizen participation and community entrepreneurship tie to the more general concepts of social capital and civil society. Civil society is subject to a variety of definitions, and the definition used for this work is one of the more commonly accepted applications of the term: civil society refers to the space between citizens and the government, and the processes and actors that fill that space.[8] As referenced in the introduction, most studies of civil society in B&H have focused on the roles that NGOs and

[6] Rao, Vijayendra and Ghazala Mauseri. 'Community-Based (and Driven) Development: A Critical Review.' World Bank Policy Research Working Paper (2004), 3. Available online through The World Bank's Data and Research materials, www.worldbank.org.
[7] *Ibid*, 2.
[8] This definition closely matches that used by USAID's Bosnia Mission, see 'Civil Society, Democratization, and Development: Clearing the Analytical Ground,' in *Democratization*, 1:3 (Autumn 1994) as cited in USAID/BiH Civil Society: Final Report 2004.

others play in filling that space between citizens and the government. This research examines one of the endpoints of that definition: the citizens themselves and the dynamics of their interactions with local civil society actors (or lack thereof).

Through promoting citizen involvement in activities for the common good (usually in cooperation with community based organizations), Mozaik seeks to build social cohesion within communities. Mozaik's vision of social cohesion[9] includes a focus on the role of individual community members in building a sense of community and increasing trust between citizens and the organizations intended to serve them. This vision of socially cohesive communities necessarily draws upon community attributes that fall within the definition of social capital—trust, engagement and reciprocity. Much like civil society, social capital is itself the subject of much debate and a variety of definitions. This work will draw on Robert Putnam's classical definition of social capital as 'the features of community life that make us more productive—a high level of engagement, trust and reciprocity.'[10]

While social capital sees these pillars of social cohesion (trust, reciprocity and engagement) as community attributes, each of these aspects of social capital can also be broken down into a series of individual choices: the choice of a community member to join an association, trust his neighbors, speak to his government officials, vote, and so on. There is likely a dual-feedback scenario at play here, in that individual choices to engage in community life are influenced by the existing level of social capital and vice versa. This work seeks to understand the individual choices that contribute to a community's general sense of social cohesion, examining both the role of collective attributes such as community identity and social capital as well as individual attributes such as employment status and educational background.

The role of social capital in development has been much debated in development circles without definitive results. Michael Woolcock provides an excellent summary of this debate as well as an instructive break-down of social capital into four distinct areas that are relevant for development: Integration (intra-community ties), Linkage (extra-community networks), Synergy (state-society relations), and Organizational Integrity (internal government structures and

[9] Mozaik defines social cohesion as 'a state of harmonious and productive social relations where community members, irrespective of difference sin social and economic status, share common values and goals, have a sense of mutual commitment and belonging to the community, a sense of solidarity, responsibility and mutual recognition, and participate in activities for the common goal.'

[10] Robert Putnam has published extensively on social capital, for one example see 'The Decline of Civil Society: How Come? So What?' *Optimum* 27:1 (Summer 1996), 26.

relationships to clients and constituents).[11] Social relationships and trust provide the basis for integration—which is conceptually similar to Mozaik's vision of social cohesion. Linkage and Synergy are identified in this work as key components of community entrepreneurship—especially insofar as rural citizens are able to develop functioning and trusting relationships with both NGOs and local government officials and institutions.

The relationship between citizens and the state is often formed through NGOs, adding weight to the importance of effective relationships between NGOs and the state. In B&H, NGOs have often emerged as service providers in local settings (forming youth groups and the like in rural communities especially) and linking citizens to international donors rather than to their own government. It is, however, essential that civil society actors are able to effectively bridge the gap between citizens and the state in a manner that is both effective and trustworthy.[12] One of the key areas of development in supporting a vibrant civil society is then to facilitate points of contact between civil society actors and the government, which necessarily includes improving public officials' perceptions of NGOs and their roles.[13]

However, a common problem in newly emerging democracies and nascent civil society sectors is that NGOs tend to operate in a manner that is detached from the citizens at large. This detachment of NGOs and advocacy groups from their constituent citizens has been an enormous problem in post-war B&H. One potential resolution of this problem is to empower community-based organizations, which are often grassroots groups that are more directly in touch with and tied to the needs of citizens, to engage directly with other civil society actors and the government.[14]

These community-based organizations are exactly the types of groups on which Mozaik tends to focus its work. Mozaik's original mission, when the organization was called the NGO Development Foundation, was to help CBOs and NGOs to improve upon their relationships with community members and to improve upon the bonds between such organizations and the people whom they were established to serve. This work evolved over time into the current mission of promoting social cohesion for development as the Foundation recognized that its work was about

[11] See Michael Woolcock, 'Social Capital and Economic Development: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis and Policy Framework.' *Theory and Society* 27:2 (April 1998), 168.
[12] See Christiane Olivo, 'The Practical Problems of Bridging Civil Society and the State: A Study of Round Tables in Eastern Germany.' *Polity* 31:2 (1998), 245.
[13] *Ibid*, 265.
[14] World Bank, World Development Report 1997, 'The State in a Changing World,' Oxford University Press, 1997, 114. Avaialble through ww.worldbank.org.

far more than organizations but instead included both individual citizens and the broader community. As the work that follows shows, Mozaik's transition to this more comprehensive approach has been effective in many respects, but the transition is not yet complete. There are areas of work, most specifically those focused on improving the points and methods for contact between citizens, civil society actors and the government, that can be further developed so as to enable Mozaik to work more effectively to build social cohesion.

Methodology

I conducted this research over a ten-month period during my time as a Hart Fellow (a fellowship program sponsored by Duke University's Sanford Institute for Public Policy's Hart Leadership Program) with the Mozaik Community Development Foundation. The research included intensive case studies in three returnee communities in different geographic areas of B&H. The research period in each community included four weeks of residence in the community, with a local family, from Sunday through Wednesday of each week.

Over the course of this research period, I conducted focus groups and interviews, as well as observation of community life and community organizations. The first week in two communities included focus groups with women entitled, 'Give me a Tour of Your Community.' [15] Together, we drew a map of their village and spoke briefly about life there. This session included only women as a way to gain entry into community life and introduce myself. If the session had been mixed by gender, I suspected that the women would defer to the men present.

In the remaining research period, I conducted one-on-one interviews with local residents, largely through a snowball sample selection process over the course of the research period.[16] Within the interview pool, I made every effort to have equal representation of men and women and young and elderly people, as well as representation from different ethnic groups and geographic diversity in terms of the precise location of an individual's house within the community. While the end results were never ideal, in each case I believe that they were largely representative of the demographics of the community.

[15] This focus group activity was not conducted in Kupres due to largely to inclimate weather. However, being a slightly more urban setting, summoning women for such a focus group was also culturally more difficult. This focus group was substited with a focus group that included local high school students in Kupres.

[16] A snowball sample indicates that I interviewed people who I knew who were willing to be interviewed and asked those individuals for suggestions as to who else I might interview. Toward the end of the research, I was able to specifically ask to be introduced to members of target groups (by age, gender, etc.) that I knew were underrepresented in my study in order to achieve a diverse sample.

Following the completion of the research in each community, I composed an ethnographic sketch of the community that I returned to interview subjects and have used as the basis for this analysis. The sketches of each community presented here are somewhat abbreviated; the full length ethnographic sketches of each community are available through both Mozaik's website and the Hart Fellowship Program's website.[17]

In selecting the communities to be included in the study, I choose only from those communities in which Mozaik had worked since 2002 (when Mozaik adopted its community driven approach to development). In addition, I chose to focus on returnee communities due to the complexities of social relationships in such communities and the fact that more than half of B&H's population was displaced during the war. Each of the communities in the study was multi-ethnic before and after the war, however, the ethnic composition of each was severely altered during and after the war.

In addition, I considered community size and local economic trends in selecting the communities. It was my desire to select communities with a variety of community engagement levels (essentially the dependent variable in this study) in order to explore the differences between them. However, I also wished to control for certain factors such as economics, education, and community size in order to explore the many nuances of community engagement. I relied on initial site visits and interviews with Mozaik and local NGO partner employees to assess these factors and originally identified three communities to include in the study: Tegare, Kamenica and Guča Gora.[18]

Tegare and Kamenica were selected as economically similar communities with different population sizes (with Kamenica being larger), similar education patterns, and an enormous difference in the level of community engagement (with Kamenica having far higher levels of engagement). Guča Gora was selected as a community similar in size to Tegare but wealthier and with relatively high levels of engagement.

However, upon beginning the study in Kamenica it became quickly apparent that despite an estimated 90% unemployment rate (roughly equal to Tegare's estimated unemployment rate), economic life in Kamenica is considerably less bleak than it is in Tegare. This is largely due to

[17] See http://www.mozaik.ba/english/html/research.html and http://www.pubpol.duke.edu/centers/hlp/programs/fellows/lball/research.html respectively.

[18] It is important to note that the last census conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina was in 1991, prior to the war. It is therefore completely outdated and valuable only in assessing how life *once* looked in a community and not in serving as a guide to modern life in communities across BiH.

the influx of remittances from abroad, as well as the fact that economic life in Kamenica was slightly better than that in Tegare before the war. Upon realizing this, but also in sensing during my field research that the differences in community life were not primarily due to economic factors, I decided to change the third community because Guča Gora and Kamenica were likely too similar in both economic make-up, population size, demographics (in terms of age and education), and engagement levels to provide a valuable comparison.

In place of Guča Gora, I selected the community of Kupres. The town of Kupres has a population approximately equal in size to Kamenica, a similar economic life marked by unemployment (though less severe than unemployment in Kamenica and Tegare) as well as cash influx from abroad, and, according to preliminary interviews, a low sense of community engagement. In the end, Kupres proved to have a developing sense of community engagement in that such participation in collective actives on a broad-scale is relatively new but powerful all the same. This made Kupres a particularly interesting community to observe, as many of the changes in engagement patterns have taken place in the last year.

Names used in the body of this work are fictional to protect the confidentiality of interview subjects. I did attempt to match fictional names with the actual ethnicity of interview subjects, such that Serbs tend to have typically Serb names, etc. Individual community leaders are specifically referenced by name in segments relating directly to their roles as leaders.

A Brief Glimpse at Conclusions and the Path Ahead

As communities are dynamic and complex, I recognize the challenges in drawing causal relationships despite careful site selection. However, given the role that qualitative data plays in this analysis, I believe that it is still possible to gain an understanding of individuals' choices to participate (or not) in community life and of a community's general dynamic through the data gathered in this study. Perhaps equally importantly, commonly cited factors such as education levels, economics and war-time experiences were shown through this research to be largely removed from community engagement patterns. Instead, gender (especially as related to educational disparities), leadership, and the nature of local organizational structures emerged as key elements affecting individuals' choices to participate in community activities. The deficit of leaders' and citizens' democratic skills were shown to be key barriers to community entrepreneurship insofar as they limit the abilities of communities to work with and through local

governments on projects that fall clearly within the realm of government responsibilities; such relationships with local governments and the presence of local institutions seemed to be the key factors affecting community entrepreneurship. A key barrier to developing these relationships is the chronically low level of expectations that BH citizens have for their government officials.

This finding opens the way for additional research that could prove valuable to Mozaik's and others' work in the future regarding the political culture in B&H. While organizations such as the OSCE have conducted broad polling, there is a dearth of in-depth cultural analysis assessing citizens' perceptions and expectations of local governing authorities insofar as the *idea of government* is concerned and, especially, how such perceptions have changed and might still evolve over time. Much in the way that apathy has become the catch-all term to mask a deficit of analysis of citizen engagement in community life in B&H, it seems that beneath the label of apathy there is also a far more complex picture of citizen engagement with the government in B&H. Exploring this political culture further might open the way for concerted efforts to bring about long-term change in some of the structural barriers to effective community entrepreneurship and political progress in B&H.